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Fragility

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SPaN
Supporting people through crisis

Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus

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Acknowledgement

This operational note has been written by Georgia Rowe.

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Introduction

The world is seeing some of the worst levels ever of violence and displacement, driven by political instability, conflict, complex emergencies, failed peace agreements and disasters. The international humanitarian system delivers assistance and protection to more people than ever. Many countries requiring assistance are affected by multiple and compounding crises, such as conflict, natural disasters and forced displacement. Between 2004 and 2014, 58 per cent of deaths from disasters occurred in countries that are amongst the world's top 30 most fragile states.[1] Such global trends have also led to displacement on an unprecedented scale. And crises are lasting longer: two thirds of international humanitarian assistance now goes to long-term recipients.

Extreme poverty and deprivation is also increasingly concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected states. According to estimates, by 2030, more than 80 per cent of the world's extreme poor will be living in such states.[2] Yet less than one in five of these countries are on track to meet the SDGs.[3] There is increasing recognition of the need to protect the development gains achieved during stable times from being eroded by recurrent and predictable shocks and stresses. If this situation is not urgently addressed, global SDG targets will not be met.

Traditional models of humanitarian and development assistance are being challenged by such trends. Frequent, complex and protracted crises are placing extreme demands on the humanitarian system. Providing short-term humanitarian support to complex, long-term challenges can compromise the impact of assistance. And traditional development-oriented social protection faces the challenge of both scaling up in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and adapting to the changing nature of shocks and vulnerabilities, in order to better complement emergency assistance. New approaches are therefore needed to better address the needs of vulnerable populations living in fragile and conflict-affected situations and help ensure they are not left behind.

Against this background, international commitments to foster greater collaboration and coherence across the humanitarian-development nexus have strengthened. Social protection and humanitarian assistance, particularly cash or food-based assistance, offer opportunities for common programming due to their prevalence, coverage, well-established impacts, including in fragile and conflict-affected situations, and the design and operational similarities between some humanitarian and social protection approaches.

This Operational Note provides an overview of how to foster greater links between social protection and humanitarian assistance in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It sets out the anticipated benefits of, and policy mandate for, this approach. It outlines an intervention framework, underlying principles, and factors that shape response options and levels of engagement. An illustrative process for operationalising the approach is set out. Links to tools and further resources are provided throughout.

The note builds on the EC Reference Document 'Social Protection Across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus: A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises' and is intended as a gateway to further resources. It is complemented by a note on social protection in contexts of forced displacement. The prime target audience is European Commission practitioners in EU delegations and ECHO field offices as well as ECHO, DEVCO and NEAR operational desks. It also aims to be useful to practitioners from EU member states, international and national agencies and national governments.

1 *The Next Frontier for Disaster Risk Reduction, Overseas Development Institute, 2017.*
2 *OECD, States of Fragility, 2018; SDG Progress: Fragility, Crisis and Leaving No One Behind. ODI, 2018.*
3 *Selected SDGs relating to basic services.*

Social Protection, Humanitarian Assistance and Fragility

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection can be defined as a broad range of public, and sometimes private, instruments to tackle the challenges of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.[4] Social protection programmes and systems exhibit a wide range of objectives, from directly reducing income poverty and other deprivations (e.g. nutrition, protection or shelter, etc.) to promoting human development, access to jobs and basic social services, addressing economic and social vulnerabilities and contributing to pro-poor economic growth. Formal social protection instruments include: social assistance; social insurance; social care services and labour market interventions.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship refer to assistance that is provided to '...save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.'[5] Whilst various types of humanitarian assistance exist, the modality with the most similarities to social protection, and particularly social assistance, in terms of design, delivery features and common target group is humanitarian cash and voucher assistance, and, perhaps to a slightly lesser degree, food transfers. Cash and vouchers in particular are increasingly used as a humanitarian response modality with global calls to increase their use.[6]

FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS

Situations of conflict and fragility take various forms. Several definitions and typologies of fragile states and contexts exist. The OECD States of Fragility Report, for example, presents fragility along five dimensions and provides a dynamic description of fragile contexts.[7] The EC Reference Document Operating in Situations of Conflict and Fragility. EU staff Handbook, 2014, emphasises that fragility is multidimensional, and cites the security-capacity-legitimacy model.[8] This classifies situations of fragility according to three sets of issues:

- ***Security gap:*** This refer to a state's inability to establish a minimal level of security within its territory and its incapability to resolve conflicts between different social groups.
- ***Capacity gap:*** A state suffering from a capacity gap lacks the capacity to provide minimal public goods and services to its population.
- ***Legitimacy gap:*** This refers to states in which a significant proportion of the political elite and society rejects the established authorities, opposing their illegitimate powers.

Besides whole states, sub-national and transnational areas can be fragile or conflict-affected. Examples include the sub-regions of Northern Uganda, the Bangsomoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines, some parts of Southern Thailand and the 'arc of instability' stretching from the horn of Africa to the Sahel. Many fragile and conflict-affected contexts have some degree of deficiency across all three dimensions. However, the severity of the gap across each dimension will shape the response options and approaches available.

4 *European Commission (2015) Supporting Social Protection Systems, Tools and Methods Series, Concept Paper No. 4, European Commission.*

5 *Although different definitions and interpretations of humanitarian assistance exist, for the purposes of this note humanitarian assistance is understood to include support provided by national governments as well as the international community.*

6 *See for example the World Humanitarian Summit Grand Bargain which commits to Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming and the December 2018 statement by the principles of UNOCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP to increase the use of cash.*

7 *See for example the World Bank, DFID, the New Deal, the OECD/DAC States of Fragility Report and the LSE-Oxford Commissions' report Escaping the Fragility Trap.*

8 *Call, C. 2010, Beyond the 'failed state': Toward conceptual alternatives,*

Further Resources

- Social Protection Across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus: A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises, European Commission, provides information on different social protection instruments, and operational experiences of working with each.
- Operating in Situations of Conflict and Fragility, EU staff Handbook, European Commission Reference Document No. 17, 2015 www.europa.eu/capacity4dev/t-and-m-series/blog/operating-situations-conflict-and-fragility-eu-staff-handbook-0
- Beyond the 'failed state': Toward conceptual alternatives, Call, C. 2010, www.journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354066109353137

Why This Approach?

The motivation for creating closer links between social protection and humanitarian interventions is to better meet the chronic and acute needs of crisis-affected populations, contribute to reducing humanitarian needs and ultimately, secure a path to peace and sustainable development.

Extensive evidence demonstrates that social protection can help reduce poverty, inequality and deprivation with positive impacts on human capital development and economic growth, including in fragile and conflict-affected settings.[9] The combination of social and economic impacts can also contribute to strengthening resilience, enhancing the capacity of poor households to cope with and withstand crises better. In some circumstances social protection can also contribute to strengthening social cohesion and stability.

Working with social protection in crisis contexts can contribute to greater effectiveness, efficiency and suitability, for example by:

Reducing response times: Working with social protection programmes or systems (e.g. existing beneficiary lists or payment mechanisms) can enable a rapid delivery of assistance, particularly where actions are part of preparedness plans.

Avoiding duplications: Working with existing systems can reduce overlaps between agencies responding to a crisis and streamline support to beneficiaries.

Strengthening national systems or building the foundations of future systems: For example, through building the capacities of social protection staff or systems as part of a humanitarian intervention or as part of a development intervention in protracted or post-crisis contexts.

Offering choice and dignity: People may derive a greater sense of dignity and control by receiving predictable support through established, systematised channels.

Supporting local economies: Using regular, predictable cash-based responses supports local markets, jobs and incomes, extending economic benefits to others including host communities.

Offering a progressive exit strategy: A smoother transition between assistance in normal times and during a crisis may be achieved, for example, by bolstering the role of national governments in the immediate aftermath and in longer-term recovery.

Supporting sustainability of impacts and enhancing Value for Money: The effectiveness and efficiencies brought about by the above benefits can contribute to achieving greater VfM.

9 *See for example Davis et al, 2016, From Evidence to Action: The Story of Cash Transfers and Impact Evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa, FAO, UNICEF; Bastagli et al. 2016, Cash Transfers: What Does the Evidence Say?; Carpenter, et al., 2012, Social Protection and Basic Services in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations.*

Further Resources

- **Social protection and humanitarian actors,** Monique Pariat, Director-General, DG ECHO, https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/articles/social-protection-and-humanitarian-actors-qa-monique-pariat-director-general-echo
- **Social protection as an instrument for emergency contexts**, Jean-Louis Ville, former acting Director of People and Peace Directorate, DG DEVCO, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/119144_fi
- **Beyond cash transfers: Social protection in fragile contexts**, https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/articles/beyond-cash-transfers-social-protection-fragile-contexts
- **What role can social protection systems play in responding to humanitarian emergencies?** https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=dHl38bb_cjs

Policy Instruments

There is now a clear international consensus to work towards maximising the use of social protection systems and approaches in situations of fragility and conflict.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit Grand Bargain commitments include pledges to increase the use of cash-based assistance, work with and strengthen national social protection systems. The Joint statement of the members of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) to the World Humanitarian Summit calls on governments, development and humanitarian actors to invest in the development of nascent safety nets in contexts of extreme fragility and protracted crises.

At the European Union level, the New European Consensus on Development (2017/C 210/01) emphasises that fragile and conflict-affected contexts 'require special attention and sustained international engagement in order to achieve sustainable development.' The 2011 Commission Communication 'Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change' also underlined that the EU should strive to help fragile and conflict-affected countries 'establish functioning and accountable institutions that deliver basic services and support poverty reduction.' The Joint Communication on a Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action, (JOIN (2017) 21) and the Council conclusion of 13/11/2017 recognise that the EU should '...enhance close cooperation of EU political, humanitarian and development actors on protracted crises and displacement...' Further details of policies are in Annex 2 of the EC Reference Document.

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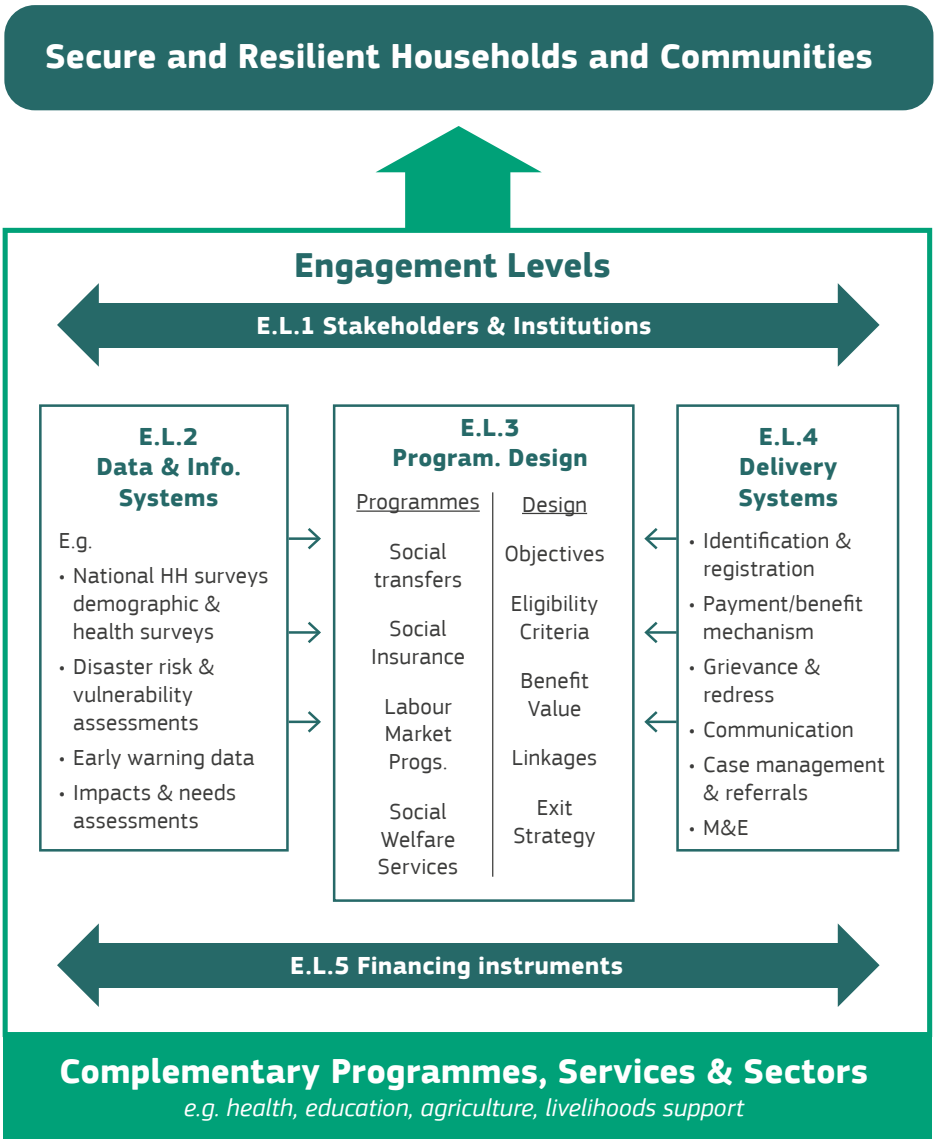
Strengthening the Links: What's Involved?

Intervention Framework

Optimising interactions between humanitarian and social protection interventions requires practitioners to assess and engage with one or more of the **five** building blocks, outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Levels of engagement with social protection in fragile and conflict-affected contexts
Source: Authors



Government social protection in many fragile and conflict-affected contexts will be nascent or developing. As such, the building blocks of state social protection are likely to be relatively underdeveloped or weak. However, in all contexts, a range of non-government social protection and humanitarian assistance is likely to be present, alongside any state provision. The above intervention framework applies equally to a range of humanitarian interventions. Understanding the current situation for both social protection and relevant humanitarian interventions, across each of the above five dimensions is the foundation for determining appropriate response options.

Principles

The following principles and approaches should underpin social protection-oriented responses in fragile and conflict-affected situations:

DO NO HARM: Do No Harm analyses should be jointly[10] conducted to establish any unintended or unforeseen negative impacts. This includes ensuring that initiatives do not damage the underlying national social protection system, for example by overloading and diluting the core policy objectives or placing excessive pressure on front-line delivery staff or systems. Also, receiving emergency support through a regular social protection system should not make beneficiaries worse off than they would have been through a stand-alone emergency intervention.

Conflict sensitivity is one form of analysis which contributes to the Do No Harm principle. All EU action in a conflict-affected setting can, and is likely to, have an impact on the conflict. Conflict sensitivity means making best efforts to ensure that EU actions (political, policy, external assistance) avoid having a negative impact and maximise the positive impact on conflict dynamics, thereby contributing to conflict prevention, structural stability and peace building. Ensuring that such analyses consider the gender dimensions of conflict strengthens conflict analyses. More broadly, other analyses may also contribute to ensuring a Do No Harm approach including state building analyses which consider whether an intervention is likely to strengthen the state and its institutions or undermine them. Protection mainstreaming refers to the imperative for actors to prevent, mitigate and respond to protection threats that are caused or perpetuated by action/inaction, by ensuring the respect of fundamental protection principles – no matter what the sector or objective. It prioritises: i) safety & dignity ii) meaningful access and iii) accountability.

BUILD PEACE AND RESILIENCE: Beyond doing no harm, actions should have the added benefit of building longer-term peace and strengthening resilience. Like fragility, resilience is multidimensional (societal, political, economic, environmental and security-related) and is relevant at all levels (state, societal, community, households and individuals). It is not an end in itself but a means to build peace, prevent disasters and conflicts, and mitigate their consequences. Social protection can be particularly effective in raising individual and household resilience, thereby contributing to resilience at higher levels. Resilience approaches should focus on: a) strengthening the adaptability to withstand specific shocks and pressures; b) building the capacity to recover and restore functions; and/or c) promoting the capacities to manage risks and opportunities in a peaceful manner. Key elements for the implementation of the resilience approach are building resilience through inclusive approaches and acknowledging the cross-cutting nature of resilience.

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL OWNERSHIP: The primary role of the state in supporting vulnerable populations is well recognised in law. In support of this aim, a clear commitment to work with and through government to the greatest extent possible is reflected in several global and EU policy instruments. The principle of independence does not necessarily preclude working with governments. The need to maintain independence and impartiality is relevant only in contexts where the role of the state is suspect, (e.g. government is party to a conflict). In other contexts, governments should be involved to the greatest extent possible. Working with government can contribute to building state capacity and legitimacy. Evidence shows that bypassing government systems can undermine state building.[11] The additional benefits of using country systems can include: buying donors a seat at the table of government policy dialogue, through which to advocate for strengthened systems; incentivising increased oversight and engagement from the government, and improved capacity-building interventions across other sectors, brought about by the increased knowledge gained through working closely with government on social protection.

10 *'Joint' in the context of this note can mean, at a minimum, humanitarian and social protection actors but may also include the full range of relevant actors in any given contexts, such as national government, political and diplomatic actors, donor and UN agencies, INGOs and local CSOs and other development partners.*

11 *Hart et. al. 2015 and Commission on State Fragility Growth and Development, 2018.*

PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE: This approach encourages agencies to think about how people can most easily and continuously receive support during fluctuating periods of stability-fragility regardless of the institutional mandate or delivery modalities of individual agencies. Putting people's needs at the centre can mean that households' constraints and opportunities are more effectively considered during implementation. Tangible examples include considering challenges around accessibility of programme delivery systems, including the usability of new technologies such as smart cards or mobile money. Where services already exist, understanding how people use these services in practice, and what their experience of service delivery is, can help inform adaptations.

Providing cash linked to other support can be a key way to put people's complex needs at the centre of an intervention, leading to stronger impacts compared to cash alone.[12] Such linkages might be in the form of referrals to existing services or social and behaviour-change communications as a core component of a social protection programme (i.e. 'cash-plus' interventions)[13]. One-stop shops which facilitate access to a range of social services may be helpful, if established as part of the social protection system prior to a crisis. Interventions may also be designed with logical, sequential pathways between services in mind, providing pathways for beneficiaries to move from one programme or government service to another as their needs change and as their reliance on social transfers reduces.

FLEXIBILITY AND SIMPLICITY: Fragile and conflict environments are challenging; the context on the ground is complex, it can quickly change, and, for rapid onset crises, it is rare for all information to be available at the outset. This requires that assistance is designed to be as simple and flexible as possible. This also underscores the need for effective preparedness. As a general guide, it is best practice to work with and adapt the operational systems and processes that already exist rather than developing parallel approaches. Keeping programme objectives simple and clearly identifying the hierarchy also helps navigate the trade-offs inherent in a nexus approach by making choices easier. Be realistic about what can be achieved and adjust accordingly.

GENERATE EVIDENCE: The extent to which social protection can complement humanitarian assistance and vice versa hinges in part on the quality of evidence available. However, forging closer links, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, is a relatively new topic and as such, though promising, the evidence base is still emerging. Questions that remain unanswered include: analysing what works, in which contexts and why; systematically comparing social protection-focused interventions to stand-alone humanitarian responses; assessing social protection instruments beyond social assistance; understanding how political economy influences options and outcomes; reviewing the range of financial instruments available, and understanding exactly how and in what circumstances social protection can address conflict and fragility and support state building. Better documentation and sharing of lessons should therefore be a central feature of all initiatives.

12 *See for example Roelen et al. 2017*

13 *Cash-plus programmes can be characterised as social protection interventions that provide regular transfers in combination with additional components or linkages that seek to augment income effects. This is done either by inducing further behavioural changes or by addressing supply-side constraints (Roelen, 2017).*

Approaches, Hints & Tips

The nature of social protection options and appropriate approaches in fragile and conflict-affected contexts will be influenced by at least three key factors:

1. The existing social protection context
2. The fragility context
3. The stage of the crisis

Approaches for operating in these situations are outlined below.

Factor 1: EXISTING SOCIAL PROTECTION CONTEXT

The maturity of a country's social protection system informs the degree to which it may potentially be leveraged, in whole or in part, to reach populations in need in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Several indicators should be used to determine the system's level of development including the comprehensiveness and coherence of the legislative and policy framework, coverage of the population and of vulnerable groups, institutional coherence, capacities and coordination, levels, nature and sources of financing, strengths and challenges of particular programmes and their delivery systems, and the extent of government leadership. The more mature a social protection system is, the better able it is likely to be to reach people in need. There are broadly three common ways of working with social protection in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, each influenced in part by the maturity of the existing social protection system. These are outlined below. **The categories outlined below are not mutually exclusive. In many contexts a combination of adapting on-going programmes, framing new programmes in line with a nexus approach and building government capacity will be required.**

APPROACH	HINTS & TIPS

Align, Inform, Transition

Often most appropriate for a basic level of maturity.

Government social protection may not exist, may be suspended, or may be small scale and fragmented, with limited coverage, a weak policy and legislative framework, unclear institutional structures and mandates and weak delivery systems.

This involves considering how to deliver humanitarian assistance in a manner that can better meet the social protection needs of crisis-affected populations and potentially contribute to building future social protection systems. The ultimate aim is to transition eligible chronically poor and vulnerable households over to long-term government-led systems. The approach may also be applicable as an interim measure for non-nationals prior to integration into national systems.

- Can lead to short-term efficiency savings if it helps reduce duplication within the humanitarian system
- In the medium to longer term it can build a more sustainable approach to emergency response with greater predictability, potential for scalability and possibly government transition.

The approach may take the following forms:

- **Align existing or new humanitarian interventions with each other or with future or planned government social protection programmes**. For example, through aligning key design features such as eligibility criteria, transfer values, programme linkages or exit strategies. Or aligning delivery systems such as registration and enrolment processes, payment mechanisms, grievance and redress or communication systems.
- **Design and deliver humanitarian programmes according to principles of scalability, sustainability & long-term, future government delivery.** In practical terms, this may mean designing lower transfer values than a stand-alone humanitarian response (see Annex One for information on setting transfer values), or simplifying eligibility criteria (e.g. demographic) or targeting processes.
- **Document and engage with social protection actors on operational and information systems developed by humanitarian actors, to inform future social protection systems.** Various elements of humanitarian action, while geared to short-term relief, may be useful for social protection actors e.g. geospatial information systems, market analysis, nutritional programmes (Gentilini et al., 2018).

- Ensure extensive coordination and strong donor leadership
- Consider the need for simplification of design and delivery features (e.g. eligibility criteria or targeting processes)
- Be prepared to compromise between ideal humanitarian design and the most appropriate approach from a long-term perspective.
- Encourage implementing partners to work with the same service providers as each other and / or as exiting government programmes.
- Ensure good documentation and build engagement with government into programme plans to support knowledge transfer.
- Consider the risk that drawing on humanitarian interventions to inform future social protection programmes may result in a narrow or inappropriate conceptualisation of social protection (e.g. tight poverty- or vulnerability-focused targeting as opposed to entitlement-based, categorical approaches).
- Be realistic about long term transition possibility.

PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

- *In **Sudan**, the EU and partners will advocate to government on the need to strengthen links between cash-based humanitarian interventions and nascent safety nets.*
- *In **Mali**, features of the EU funded KEY programme, such as transfer values, were designed to align with the nascent social transfer scheme being implemented in the south of Mali to support the eventual national roll-out of this scheme as part of the national social transfer system (Smith, 2018).*
- *In **Somalia**, , the EU is working with a range of agencies and the government to help move from a situation of multiple, fragmented non-state emergency interventions towards a more predictable, government-owned comprehensive social protection system. A safety-net programme will serve as one programmatic stepping stone towards this aim. A Donor Working Group has been convened to liaise with government and coordinate the development of priority policies and approaches, and a Technical Assistance Facility will support donors, government and other institutions to further the long-term aim (Goodman and Majid, 2017).*

Utilise and Preserve

Often most appropriate for intermediate or advanced level of maturity.
In these contexts, government social protection shows reasonable levels of coverage and coherence, strong delivery systems and relatively clear institutional structures and mandates.

This approach is relevant when national delivery systems for social protection exist pre-crisis and offer the possibility to respond even during an acute crisis by providing a starting point for reaching crisis-affected populations including people in situations of forced displacement. It may support quicker or more appropriately timed support, increased coverage, greater predictability of support, reduce duplication and potentially enhance government ownership and sustainability of support compared to a stand-alone humanitarian response. The basic approach involves adjusting existing programmes, or elements of programmes, such as beneficiary lists or payment mechanisms, to reach crisis-affected populations. Global experience to date has been arranged into a typology of approaches:[14]

Design tweaks: *The design of social protection programmes and systems can be adjusted in a way that takes into consideration the crises that a country typically faces. These are adjustments to a routine social protection programme to maintain the regular service in a crisis.*

Horizontal expansion: *Programmes can temporarily include new, crisis-affected beneficiaries, including people in situations of forced displacement, in an existing social protection programme.*

Vertical expansion: *A social protection programme can temporarily increase the benefit value or duration of a benefit provided through an existing programme, either for all or for some of the existing beneficiaries.*

Piggy backing: *A social protection programme's delivery system (e.g. beneficiary list, payment mechanism, communication system) can be used to respond to a crisis, but the response programme itself is managed separately from the social protection programme.*

These approaches are not mutually exclusive and other approaches should be considered.

- Prepare in advance where possible: in rapid onset, acute emergencies where no prior planning has taken place, it will be difficult to utilise existing systems or programmes.
- Identifying one 'backbone' programme to serve as the main social protection mechanism through which to channel humanitarian assistance can be an effective entry point. The programme should have large enough coverage (which overlaps with crisis-affected populations) and / or sufficiently robust delivery systems to be capable of effectively contributing to a humanitarian response, subject to adjustments in design and delivery components.
- Be mindful of the costs to government of using established systems, such as overloading staff or delivery mechanisms, or causing confusion and potentially undermining support for the core social protection programme.
- Include government capacity building so that staff or systems are left in a stronger position than before the crisis.

PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

Most experience comes from natural disaster and economic crisis contexts. Below are links to case studies from the use of social protection in response to fragility, conflict and forced displacement.

- *In **Uganda**, the EU plans to assess the ability of existing social safety net programmes to include vulnerable refugees and host communities (European Union, 2018).*
- *In **Yemen**, the Social Fund for Development (SFD) supported by the EU, was kept operational during the conflict by external aid that provided 80-85 per cent of its financial resources. This also helped to ensure readiness for scalable implementation during the recovery and reconstruction phase. All elements of the programme – from design, to delivery systems to implementing partners needed to be adapted to the conflict context. The institutional autonomy of the SFD, granted before the conflict, played a key role in enabling it to operate with neutrality and flexibility during the crisis (Al-Ahmadi et. al. 2018).*

14 *The typology developed by O'Brien at. al. 2018b includes the four categories outlined under 'Utilise and Preserve 'plus 'Alignment'. Alignment is very similar to the Align, Inform and Transition category in the table above but has been separated from the other four approaches and further expanded for the purposes of this note.*

Develop and Strengthen

Appropriate for mature, intermediate and basic levels of maturity.

Applicable where it is possible and appropriate to work with the government and their programmes

This involves bringing together humanitarian and development actors to build the capacity of government staff and systems to extend, strengthen or maintain social protection. The objective is to build the capacity of government to design, deliver, monitor and coordinate social protection programmes in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It might include, for example, capacity-building support to government staff, support to strengthen the policy and legal framework, the design of new programmes, and support to strengthen delivery systems including linkages to other services.

- Most relevant in protracted crises or post-conflict situations, where there is a strong overlap between chronically poor and vulnerable households and those also affected by transient risks resulting from fragility and conflict.
- Where possible this approach should be an integral part of all social protection engagement in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Even in the most challenging circumstances with very low levels of government capacity, evidence shows that it is often possible to deliver some form of modest capacity or system building support – see or example World Bank 2016 and 2018).
- Draw on well-established approaches and tools for building government social protection systems in more stable contexts as these are also relevant in many fragile situations – the difference in context being one of degrees rather than fundamental – e.g. more pronounced capacity, security or legitimacy gaps.
- Consider how lessons and systems generated by humanitarian agencies during an emergency (vulnerability data, beneficiary lists, distribution systems, etc.) can be retained and, if appropriate, shared with governments in a post-crisis setting.
- Consider opportunities for building shock-responsive social protection features into the design of nascent and emerging social protection programmes and systems.
- Building up a labour force of social workers with adequate skills, capacities and numbers may contribute to a crisis response through identifying complex needs and arranging referrals.

PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

Most experience comes from natural disaster and economic crisis contexts. Below are links to case studies from the use of social protection in response to fragility, conflict and forced displacement.

- *In **Myanmar**, the Livelihood and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) works directly with the Department of Social Welfare to support delivery of the Mother and Child Cash Transfers (MCCT) in Chin State. The aim is for the Government of Myanmar (GoM) to assume full financial and management responsibility for the MCCT after the initial two-year implementation period. A robust programme of evidence generation, implemented by an international non-governmental organisation (INGO), further supports system building efforts. This has contributed to government efforts to now introduce the MCCT across Rakhine State to 30,000 pregnant women in addition to scaling up in Chin State. The GoM's policy commitments in the National Social Protection Strategic Plan, the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Medium Term Costed Plan (2018-2022) to introduce a shock-responsive social protection system provides the incentive to 'future proof' the social protection portfolio of programmes (European Commission & European Union External Action, 2018).*
- *In **Uganda**, the EU plans to set up new social protection schemes, or reinforce existing ones, to better support refugees and host populations (European Union 2018).*
- *In **Colombia**, the availability of a network of professional social workers and the existence of a range of social protection programmes with broad coverage and robust delivery systems allowed the country to effectively respond to the rapid influx of 24,000 Colombians and Venezuelan nationals from Venezuela. Mobile units of interdisciplinary teams were deployed to identify and refer beneficiaries. 'Social inclusion and reconciliation' plans were developed, and existing psychosocial, legal, nutritional, public works and skills training programmes were scaled up (Uribe, 2016).*
- *In **Palestine**, numerous links between the flagship EU funded Cash Transfer Program, a WFP-supported food voucher scheme and other short-term emergency interventions are purposefully designed into the overall system. These include a common targeting methodology and database and a payment card which other organisations can use to deliver assistance. Capacity-building support to the Ministry of Social Development is designed to strengthen the sector as a whole rather than individual programmes (Gentilini et al., 2018).*

Factor 2: FRAGILITY CONTEXT

Whilst many fragile countries may face challenges in each of the three areas of security, capacity and legitimacy, the relative degree of deficiency in each will influence available options and approaches. And fragility is a multidimensional context in which many other factors will play a role. The majority of fragile and conflict-affected countries and situations are also affected by natural disasters and the effects of climate change. Consideration should also be given to these compounding shocks.

FRAGILITY CHALLENGES & APPROACHES

SECURITY

Where a government faces challenges in maintaining basic security across its territory the following constraints in relation to social protection provision may occur, amongst others: suspension of donor funds and actions; restrictions for non-state actors and possibly government on accessing affected populations; movements of populations, creating challenges for programme delivery.

- Conduct conflict sensitivity and other Do No Harm analyses.
- Consider multi-component projects to spread risk and maintain project momentum if some programme elements need to be suspended.
- Support UN agencies, NGO consortia, local actors and private sector partners who may have better access.
- Consider temporarily supporting government salaries and / or social protection delivery systems to preserve and prevent collapse.
- Consider simplifying programme design and delivery procedures.
- Promote IT-supported approaches; use electronic or mobile money transfers; challenge private sector service providers to propose innovative solutions to access and security constraints.
- Consider interventions for at-risk groups such as youth and ex-combatants – see Annex Two.

PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

- ***In Yemen**, despite the high risks of continuing to operate due to the active conflict, the World Bank considered that inaction or a delayed response would be far costlier from a strategic, institutional and development point of view. Innovative and flexible application of operational and financing instruments enabled reengagement.*
- ***In South Sudan,** the multiple components of the social protection support provided through the Rapid Social Response Fund meant that when the security situation deteriorated in 2016, plans for in-country assessments could be put on hold whilst plans for the remotely-delivered technical assistance components were prioritised so that the project did not lose momentum (World Bank, 2018).*

CAPACITY

Capacity gaps are often more pronounced in fragile contexts, than in stable situations. Challenges are focused largely on concerns around fiduciary risk, programme speed, effectiveness and accountability and compromising humanitarian principles.

- **Work through government systems to the extent possible.** Ensure all programmes include technical assistance to build capacity of staff and systems. During stable times, support government to develop preparedness and contingency plans and risk financing strategies.
- **Identify an appropriate mix of instruments, to work simultaneously at different levels of state and society to meet short-and long-term objectives.** The approach is not necessarily a binary choice between working through the state or with parallel systems, nor one of progressive increase in government delivery. Identify and document trade-offs. Build flexibility into operation and financing plans so that arrangements can shift, mid-programme if needed.
- **Assess which parts of government, their programmes or systems can be most effectively engaged with and supported.** Different ways of working with government carry different risks and opportunities. Working with government might include, at a minimum, ensuring that aid is reflected in the country's plans, budgets and reports. It might include aligning the design and delivery systems of non-government projects with existing government programmes or policy ambitions. It may mean designing a programme in partnership with government, with scalability in mind but implementing and financing outside government. It may mean certain parts of projects are implemented by government, or building in progressive transition to government systems over multiple years (Hart et al., 2015).
- **Consider opportunities for working with different administrative levels.** For example, local authorities are often relevant as partners where central authorities are weak or lack authority and legitimacy.

- **Apply additional safeguards where needed.** This might include assessing programme design and delivery features from a fiduciary risk perspective. It might also include the suspension of registration and enrolment into programmes before sensitive political events such as elections, to address heightened risks of programme manipulation. An assessment of, and mitigating actions around, the sustainability of programme inputs may also be more pressing in a fragile context than in more stable contexts. See Hart et al., 2015 for further mitigating strategies.
- **Consider whether engagement via EUD may be more appropriate with certain sections of government and on certain topics.** Agree common advocacy messages to be communicated by EUD. For example, highlight messages around preserving or expanding humanitarian space, the need for durable solutions and inclusive consultation processes. Agree 'red lines' from the outset and acknowledge that in some circumstances, it is not appropriate for humanitarian actors to engage even indirectly.

➲ *In **South Sudan**, capacity-building support has been provided to government to strengthen their ability to coordinate social protection and related humanitarian interventions including those delivered by humanitarian agencies (World Bank, 2018).*

➲ *In **Nigeria**, the EU and its implementing partners will support local authorities to identify and register vulnerable individuals and groups, building on work already under way by humanitarian agencies and state authorities.*

LEGITIMACY

Social protection may help diminish social unrest, help build state legitimacy and contribute to assuring peace and stability by increasing household income, access to jobs and social services, thereby building capacity to cope with shocks and stressors and the social contract. However, poorly designed and delivered social protection can exacerbate existing tensions and undermine trust in the state. Recommendations include:

- Invest in context analyses. A five-year, multi-country, mixed-method analysis looking at the role of service delivery, public perceptions and state legitimacy found that multiple, complex national, local and historical factors play a significant role in shaping people's views of the state, independent of service delivery (Nixon and Mallett, 2017).
- Review programmes through a peacebuilding and state-building lens. Consider questions such as how far the proposed programme is likely to contribute to peacebuilding and state-building goals, strengthen state institutions or undermine them. See the EU Guidance Note on the Use of Conflict Analysis in support of EU External Action.
- Consider a range of social protection instruments. Grievance, exclusion and unfairness in the workplace can lead to negative perceptions of government. Social protection schemes, such as labour market interventions which connect people to labour markets and improve conditions within them, may help tackle adverse incorporation of vulnerable workers. Interventions for 'at-risk' groups such as youth and ex-combatants may be appropriate. see Annex Two for information on programming for ex-combatants.
- Ensure culturally appropriate, transparent, simple design and delivery. Where possible, align programme design with the social values of the beneficiary community. For example, in communities where consensus-based decision-making is highly valued, community-based targeting may be more likely to boost state legitimacy; in communities where there is broad consensus on 'vulnerable groups', categorical targeting may be more likely to boost state legitimacy than targeting based on opaque poverty indicators. Conversely, if communities don't understand or agree with the eligibility criteria of a programme or if beneficiaries are perceived to be receiving unfair levels of support, this can lead to conflict within communities and hostility towards programme implementers. Where feasible, design should be based on broad consultation involving all stakeholders including beneficiaries and communities.
- Invest in the quality of front-line delivery, accountability and communication. Evidence shows that it is the on-the-ground individual experience of receiving services that matters more to perceptions of state legitimacy than who is providing the service (Nixon and Mallett, 2017). If front line programme staff are disrespectful, if programme delivery is unreliable or inconsiderate, this can undermine any trust-building benefits. Understand how people experience and perceive services at an individual level and what this might mean for building or undermining state legitimacy. Invest in grievance and redress mechanisms which promote participation, voice, empowerment and ownership, and in communication strategies to ensure the credibility and acceptance of programmes. Document delivery systems (and programme results) clearly to mitigate against, and rebuff, accusations of programme manipulation.
- Maximise the role of the state in all processes where appropriate. Maximising front line visibility may help build trust and increase the likelihood that programme benefits are attributed to the state but evidence is mixed. Do not assume that non-government provision undermines state legitimacy. Look for a range of opportunities to involve government, including building capacity to coordinate.
- Invest in social protection-oriented approaches for their own sake. Recognise that achieving state legitimacy is not the primary motivation for optimising interactions between social protection and humanitarian assistance.

➲ ***In Yemen**, inclusive, transparent targeting and community-based approaches within the Emergency Crisis Response project have been identified as contributing to social cohesion including between host communities, returnees and IDPs (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018).*

NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Most fragile and conflict-affected contexts are also impacted by natural disasters and, increasingly, by the effects of climate change. Fragility increases the chances of natural disasters occurring (for example, due to weak urban planning, insufficient or ineffective natural infrastructure), worsens their impact and, by definition, decreases the capacity of the state to respond. It also reduces the capacity to adapt to climate change.

- Prepare contingency plans for emergency response
- Consider necessary adaptations to existing or nascent social protection programmes to build in greater shock-response, across all 5 levels of engagement with SP systems e.g.
  - Strengthen data systems to understand and predict disaster risks (e.g. early warning data and systems)
  - Clarify stakeholders, roles, mandates in emergency response and ex-ante capacity-building needs
  - Consider appropriate disaster-risk and vulnerability criteria in assessments and programme eligibility criteria. Consider streamlining beneficiary identification, registration and enrolment processes.
  - Consider appropriate changes to programme design such as modalities and transfer values
  - Consider necessary changes to delivery mechanisms
  - Develop disaster risk financing strategies

Factor 3: THE STAGE OF THE CRISIS

The stage of the crisis will inform the most appropriate options and approaches. Advance planning and preparation should always be prioritised.

CRISIS STAGE	IMPLICATIONS AND ACTIONS
Pre-crisis	• Develop and strengthen government social protection capacities and systems. • Pre-plan responses in line with the existing social protection systems' level of maturity and the fragility context, as outlined above. • Build relationships and inclusive dialogue; assess context, develop contingency and financing plans.
Acute crisis	• Activate existing contingency plans for social-protection-oriented responses where they exist. • Identify the primary objective for working with social protection programmes and approaches. • Consider appropriate and feasible response options in line with the maturity of the social protection system and the fragility context, as outlined above. • Build in frequent and comprehensive review and assessment of implementation risks to allow for timely identification of potential risks and real-time mitigation actions.
Protracted crisis	• Develop and strengthen government social protection capacities and systems • For humanitarian interventions follow the approach of Align, Inform and Transition as outlined above. Consider opportunities for transitioning systems and/or beneficiaries over to government systems • Build shock-responsive features into existing programmes where social protection is advanced or intermediate, to help respond to acute shocks occurring on top of the protracted crisis. • Design interventions that offer sequential pathways between interventions as needs change.
Post crisis & long-term recovery	• Focus on building government systems and capacities and transitioning humanitarian case-loads over to national systems as appropriate and feasible. • Position social protection in areas of government with political traction and embed social protection support in financing mechanisms with high traction, e.g. budget support. • Understand and address structural access constraints; legacies of conflict continue to shape people's access to services and their exclusion from them (Nixon and Mallett, 2017).

Further Resources

- Human(itarian) Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection, Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien, 2018.
- Resilient social protection, Stefan Dercon keynote speech
- How to support state building, service delivery and recovery in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Lessons from six years of SLRC research, Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium, 2017.
- Use of Country Systems in Fragile States, Hart, et al, 2015, ODI
- The EC document Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises provides links to well-established approaches and tools for building social protection systems in more stable contexts which are also likely to be relevant in many fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Engagement Levels

Each of the five levels of engagement with social protection systems and humanitarian assistance is discussed in turn below. Precisely which unit or actor should be responsible for the different actions will depend on the specific context. A tool for assessing response options is offered in the EC Reference Document Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises.

Level 1: STAKEHOLDERS AND INSTITUTIONS

This level of engagement includes all relevant stakeholders, capacities and commitment, coordination and the policy and legal framework.

Actions

- Build relationships with social protection and disaster risk management (DRM)[15] actors, ideally in advance of an acute crisis, as well as Ministries of finance, planning, and offices of the President or Prime Minister. Also Ministries of agriculture, education and health where there is interest in supporting demand-side interventions.
- Consider alternative entry points towards a national social protection system where there is no appetite for pro-poor social protection; e.g. pensions for retired military personnel following security sector reform.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships between humanitarian, development, security and diplomatic actors.
- Ensure government leadership where appropriate. In all contexts ensure strong leadership, clarity of process and expected outcomes.
- Clarify / agree mandates, roles and responsibilities for all actors.
- Build government capacity and consensus to invest. Highlight value-for-money evidence
- Strengthen coordination systems.[16] Align with any on-going in-country nexus-like processes
- Support policy and legislative reform. Crises can create new entry points for policy dialogue and offer a window of opportunity to develop new approaches.
- Innovate and be flexible with the use of existing and policy instruments.

15 *Disaster risk management is the application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)*

16 *Which sectors or groups to coordinate with will depend on the context. At a minimum it is likely to include government and non-government social protection, DRM and emergency response coordination fora as well as cash working groups. Depending on the context It may also include government and non-government coordination fora for livelihoods, food security, nutrition, health, education, child protection or resilience services and interventions.*

- Build awareness of the benefits of collaboration and awareness of one another's fields, recognising that humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and government service delivery have different cultures and ways of working. Factor in the different procedures and timelines of all stakeholders. Understanding the limitations and opportunities for decision making in each institution is fundamental for effective collaboration.
- In contexts where many issues are contested, consider collaboration on practical actions which speak to the priorities of a range of actors and side-step more politically charged issues whilst moving a nexus agenda forward.
- Partnering with government on low-risk actions, such as capacity building or evidence generation, can serve as an entry point for trust building and ultimately broader collaboration

➲ *In **Sudan,** joint analyses and missions conducted under the EU-led nexus pilot-country process and involving the EEAS, EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa team, Member States and nexus adviser to the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator led to common agreement on the context, programmatic and advocacy priorities, and areas for EU action.*

➲ *In **Uganda,** the EC contracted a consultant to kick-start the nexus pilot-country process, focusing on inclusive dialogue and a comprehensive handover to the EU. A kick-off stakeholder workshop confirmed a common understanding of the context and priority actions, including political advocacy messages. The nexus pilot-country process is fully aligned to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (European Union, 2018).*

➲ *In **Iraq,** DFID financed dedicated staff to take forward coordination and inclusive dialogue involving a wide range of stakeholders including civil society. 'Get-to know-you' workshops were organised to start developing trust and to start discussions. Later, collaboration between agencies looking at how many people on humanitarian programme beneficiary lists would be eligible for government support according to government programme criteria was found to be a useful way of building relationships and a stepping stone to further actions.*

➲ *In **Yemen**, the success of the Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP) is attributed in part to the World Bank's longstanding partnership with Yemeni government institutions prior to the crisis (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018). A social protection consultative committee (SPCC) provides a platform for integrated and inclusive programming over the short and longer term. The Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour and includes the Ministry of Finance, UN agencies, INGOs and the private sector (Smith, 2017b).*

Sources from key informant interviews unless otherwise stated.

Level 2: DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

This level of engagement includes both ex-ante social protection data (e.g. national household surveys, demographic and health surveys, risk and vulnerability assessments) and DRM information (e.g. disaster risk assessments, ex-post impacts and needs assessments) and the systems that hold this data. Data and information management may often present significant practical obstacles to building greater links between social protection and humanitarian action – underscoring the need to invest in data and information systems in advance of a crisis, or possibly as a starting point for collaboration in protracted crises.

Actions

- Strengthen social protection information systems, including both the data and information management systems, prior to a crisis as well as DRM information systems where appropriate. Develop clear areas of linkage.
- Consider opportunities for developing assessments that serve the priorities of humanitarian and development actors and management information systems (MIS) that serve the needs of both communities and/or are inter-operable, including with government systems.
- Develop triggers for scaling up social protection with humanitarian and development actors.

- *In the **Republic of Congo,** donor support has helped the government establish a common platform for enrolment in the safety net system by creating a Social Registry Information System. The system contains a database to store applicant information and a management information system (MIS) to support monitoring, reporting, and coordination of a number of programmes (World Bank, 2016).*
- *In **Myanmar**, the Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) established by ECHO shares information collected on a specific crisis context and seeks to reduce adverse impacts through a needs assessment and adapted response. The ERM is managed by the Durable Peace Programme Joint Strategy Team in Kachin State, and implemented via the same consortium of local CSOs, managed by the same INGO. This illustrates the significance of a coordinated humanitarian and development strategy. A multi-purpose cash grant maximises efficiency and flexibility for recipients to cover a range of needs and shifting priorities. The synergies between the two programmes, in a nexus approach, confirms that working with vulnerable people necessitates parallel support to ensure that basic needs are met and self-reliance promoted in order to make meaningful engagement with peace and governance issues feasible (European Commission & European Union External Action, 2018).*
- *In **Yemen**, to protect confidentiality during the conflict, data management functions were outsourced to non-government personnel; (previously the government had been managing these steps). (Smith, 2017b).*

Level 3: PROGRAMME DESIGN

Programme design includes: programme objectives, eligibility criteria; transfer values (or the nature of the benefit); programme linkages, and the exit strategy.

Actions

- Assess socio-economic data, social protection coverage and disaster risk data ex ante, and impact and needs assessment data ex post, to inform programme design. Where not already available, commission political economy analyses to establish an understanding of interests and incentives, and conflict sensitivity and protection analyses to inform intervention design.
- Develop objectives that speak to the priorities of both humanitarian and development actors.
- Consider social cohesion objectives in design and delivery. Ensuring transparent programme processes and design features (such as eligibility criteria), basing design on existing community culture and norms and involving the community to the greatest extent possible in key design, delivery and monitoring processes may help foster social cohesion and promote a sense of community solidarity and collaboration. At a minimum it is likely to help avoid fostering social tension and unrest.
- Where appropriate design a series of complementary, coordinated programmes using both humanitarian and development policy and financing instruments or pooled funds. See for example the European Union Trust Fund experience in Mali and Burkina Faso. Use the same partners, design and delivery systems where possible.
- Build 'quick wins' into programme plans. Whilst building social protection systems takes decades, building early wins into programme design can help build confidence among all actors (Lindborg, 2018). Examples include government capacity-building initiatives or the short-term transition of some key functions (such as monitoring and evaluation) from non-state to state management.
- Consider transfer values with reference to short- and long-term objectives. Compromise and trade-offs are likely to be required. See Annex One for information on calculating transfer values.
- Build links to other programmes and services where appropriate.
- Recognise that some groups may be excluded from social protection for historical, political, geographical and/or cultural reasons. Ensure non-government provision of support to such groups.

- ***In Nigeria**, the EU and its implementing partners will undertake an assessment to determine the transfer value required to help people meet their basic needs, cope with shocks and stresses and access longer term livelihood opportunities.*
- ***In Iraq**, the exclusion of some groups from social protection services due to perceived affiliation with ISIS means that parallel non-government support will remain essential for these groups.*
- ***In Uganda**, the nexus pilot country process has committed to conduct conflict and protection analyses across all interventions (as well as gender analysis) to inform programming (European Union, 2018)*

LEVEL 4: DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Programme delivery systems include beneficiary identification, registration and enrolment processes; payment mechanisms (e.g. mobile money, ATM & smart cards etc.); grievance and redress systems; communication systems, case management and referral systems, and monitoring and evaluation.

Actions

- Select implementing partners with reference to the security, legitimacy and capacity context.
- Consider simplifying existing beneficiary identification, registration and enrolment processes – a balance between speed and accuracy will be required.
- Ensure that payment mechanisms are accessible and secure for beneficiaries, can continue to operate during a crisis, and ideally are able to absorb and disburse multiple sources of funds.
- Ensure that programme communication and grievance and redress systems are effective and accessible to disaster-affected populations.
- Jointly agree indicators and establish data-gathering processes that satisfy both humanitarian and development actors' needs.
- Work on programme delivery systems as also being an entry point for broader collaboration. Beyond the intrinsic importance of such systems, practical collaboration between stakeholders to strengthen delivery systems can be an important entry point for building relationships and confidence and ultimately catalysing broader collaboration.
- Consider innovative solutions to monitoring and evaluation such as third-party monitoring and the use of technology and social media for remote monitoring.

- ***In Kyrgyzstan,** the government set up mobile outreach services to take registration to communities. Conflict-affected households did not have to submit verification documentation for 6 months and a government taskforce fast-tracked claims for replacing lost ID cards (Smith, 2017a).*
- ***In Yemen**, the private sector payment services provider for the Social Welfare Fund relaxed enrolment requirements during the conflict to make them appropriate to marginalised groups and women – who tend to lack formal identification. They also discreetly moved money into active conflict areas and set up temporary pay points that were relatively secure and accessible to women. Messages about the social assistance programme were also communicated through familiar social welfare fund staff and a local community organisation to help ensure that marginalised groups trusted the programme and that social tensions were minimised (Smith, 2017b).*
- ***In Yemen**, the Emergency Crisis Response Project employs multiple levels of monitoring. Trained community members provide daily verbal and visual feedback using mobile and cloud-based applications. Mobile phone technology, GPS-enabled devices and geotagging of project sites helps provide timely and reliable information even from remote and difficult-to-access areas. WhatsApp platforms are used to communicate programme information. Beneficiary feedback is also shared on Twitter and live streams on Snapchat, and Facebook chats among donors, beneficiaries and the wider population are also envisaged (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018).*

Level 5: FINANCING INSTRUMENTS

Effective financing strategies and coordination of financing instruments between development programmes and humanitarian financing make common programming a reality.

Actions

- Undertake a context analysis and costing exercise to underpin a risk financing strategy for social protection scale-up.
- Identify, ideally in advance, what government is liable for, what it will do in a crisis and the cost.
- Identify multiple financing instruments to cover different magnitudes of risk. For national governments, financing options include: contingency funds, multi-year national and local disaster reserves; contingent credit; risk transfer instruments such as insurance.
- Pooled funds can spread risk across donors and agencies and allow all actors to operate under the same administrative processes, helping to harmonise operational timeframes.
- Crises can generate additional financing, offering a window of opportunity to develop new approaches.
- Innovate and be flexible with the use of financing instruments.
- Channelling financing in the midst of crises to agencies with dual humanitarian and development mandates may help forge or maintain partnerships that will be useful for post-crisis investments in national social protection systems.

> *In **Yemen**, the World Bank demonstrated flexibility and creativity in the interpretation of operational and financial instruments, to enable reengagement following the suspension of donor funds. First, staff conducted a portfolio review, cancelling Yemen's pre-conflict portfolio of 20 projects (mostly IDA financed), while ensuring that cancelled funds remained available for recommitment to Yemen. This resulted in freeing up previously suspended IDA resources. World Bank Operational Policy 2.30 (Development Cooperation and Conflict), which stipulates that if there is no government in power, assistance may be initiated by requests from the international community subject to the prior approval of the World Bank Board, was triggered by a request from UN agencies. However, under IDA's policy framework, grants to entities other than the sovereign entity are offered only outside of the regional window. In this case, for the first time in the World Bank's history, the proposed grants were to be made out of the country's own IDA resources. The Bank decided to move ahead with using Yemen's IDA allocation without government acquiescence in recognition of the risks of inaction (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018).*

Further Resources

- Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report, O'Brien et al., 2018
- Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Toolkit: Appraising the use of social protection in addressing large-scale shocks, O'Brien et al. 2018.

Engagement Process

Figure 2 provides a summarised process for working with social protection programmes and approaches in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It assumes that all stages are being carried out in advance of an acute crisis. However, this process is equally applicable during a crisis, in protracted crises or as part of post crisis and long-term recovery efforts.

Figure 2 Process for optimising social protection and humanitarian assistance interactions

Build Relationships	Govt. actors with responsibility for SP & DRM plus Monitoring, Planning & Finance • EU, EU Member States including political actors, International Development Banks • UN Agencies, CSOs and NGOs • Private sector (e.g. financial service providers)
Joint Assessment	• Poverty, vulnerability & fragility • Characteristics of affected households • Social protection & humanitarian assistance landscape across the 5 levels of engagement • Peace and resilience building factors
Appraise Options, Develop Strategy	• Joint vision • Options & alternatives • Collective objectives, outcomes & targets for programmng and advocacy Modalities • Road-Map
Formulate & Deliver	• Pre-plan & deliver response across 5 levels of engagement: 1. Institutional & policy architecture; 2. Data 3. Programme desgn; 4. Delivery systems; 5. Financing architecture
Learn and Adjust	• Understand short and long-term benefits including VfM of SP oriented interventions • Adapt existing M&E frameworks

Further Resources

- **ASEAN Guidelines on Disaster Responsive Social Protection to Increase Resilience, 2019** (forthcoming). Sets out when and why building disaster risk considerations into SP systems is important and provides strategic guidance for policy makers on taking forward the approach. A detailed process, including critical questions to consider at each stage, is provided.
- **Cash Preparedness Assessment Tool, Guidance Document, UNICEF, 2019 (forthcoming)**. Supports practitioners to determine the 'readiness' of a country's SP system to implement preparedness and mitigation strategies supporting the use of cash transfer programming in emergencies. It provides guidance on identifying thematic areas to be considered in the analysis; information needs to inform assessment of 'shock readiness'.
- **The Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment Tools (ISPA)** offer resources to analyse the SP system at country level. Whilst not focused on nexus approaches they do provide a resource to help assess the strengths and weakness of the existing SP system. The tools provided are in-depth and reportedly can take a significant time. They are not for rapid assessment.

Annex 1

Transfer Values

Because regular social assistance programmes aim to supplement the income of target groups and have broader coverage and longer timeframes than humanitarian assistance, they tend to have lower transfer values than humanitarian assistance. Political economy factors also heavily influence social transfer values – including concerns about affordability, creating dependency, and creating social tensions between other poor beneficiaries. In most social assistance programmes in low-income countries, transfer values are widely acknowledged to be inadequate for the poorest households (ILO, 2017). In many cases, short-term poverty reduction impacts are sacrificed for long term system-building needs. In humanitarian assistance however, transfers may cover up to 100 per cent of a household's total needs. The 'minimum expenditure basket' is often used to inform the transfer values of humanitarian cash transfers.

Generally establishing transfer values in humanitarian responses will be informed by consideration of:

1. the objective of the intervention
2. the income a household requires to meet their needs in line with humanitarian standards
3. beneficiaries' existing capacities and what other assistance will be provided, including through any regular social assistance programme
4. the transfer values, frequency and duration for other humanitarian cash transfers
5. affordability

The rationale for the transfer value, frequency and duration for interventions seeking to work with or orient towards social protection programmes should be clear and well communicated. Compromise is likely to be required between the optimal value, frequency and duration from a humanitarian needs perspective and what is optimum from a long-term social protection perspective. For example, where a top up of funds is being provided to existing social protection beneficiaries (vertical scale-up), a decision must be made as to whether the value of the regular transfer should be included as part of the total benefit calculation, or whether there should be more direct alignment with the transfer value, frequency and duration of stand-alone humanitarian transfers being implemented in the same locations by other actors (O'Brien, 2018b).

Further Resources

- Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants, 2015, (CaLP, et al, 2015).
- Guidance on measuring and maximising value for money in social transfer programmes – second edition (White et al. 2015).

Annex 2

Social Protection, Violent Conflict and Ex-Combatants

Social protection programmes, particularly cash and food transfers, public works and labour market interventions, have been used in some countries as part of efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants into civilian life. This support can provide pathways of opportunity that might provide quick wins, reduce insecurity and minimise the likelihood of a return to conflict. Evidence from programmes targeting ex-combatants as well as programmes aiming to reduce violent conflict more generally, points to the following necessary considerations:

- **Context analysis and local adaption is essential.** Evidence on what works, what doesn't and why is scare. There are no blueprints for implementation or clear 'best practices'.
- **Clearly identify a hierarchy of programme objectives to enable an informed approach to addressing trade-offs in programme design.** Different primary goals may lead to different programme designs depending on the context.
- **Consider targeting low or moderately-insecure rather than highly-insecure districts**, given evidence that social protection programmes may be better at reducing the risk of violent conflict in the former
- **Consider community engagement in targeting processes**. Involving the community may help promote social cohesion and reduce perceptions of corruption or manipulation.
- **Carefully consider eligibility criteria.** Programmes which require the handing-in of a weapon in order to be eligible can create perverse incentives.
- **Consider interventions to support wider community members**, alongside ex-combatants to avoid creating feelings of unfair treatment and community tensions.
- **Carefully consider payment location where cash (or food) is being used as part of demobilisation efforts,** to avoid the risk, or perception, of a cash-for-weapons programme.
- **Ensure a robust communication and grievance and redress system** to reduce the risks of misunderstanding or manipulation.
- **Consider benefit levels (transfer values, no./work-days) with a view to creating a sharper trade-off between participation in armed groups vs participation in a social protection programme.** Analysis of armed groups' organisational structures, tactics and incentives may help.
- **Consider labour market interventions** where the mistreatment of workers may be a driver of conflict.
- **Include conflict-related questions in monitoring and evaluation tools to maximise opportunity for learning.**

Source: Beazley, et al. 2016 and Willibald, S., 2006

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